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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7542
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4616
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1834
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1507
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3611
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1377
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2213
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0512
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000011

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, INR/EAP, DS/IP/EAP, S/CT
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: SULAWESI UPDATE -- TENSION IN THE SOUTH, CALM IN
POSO

REF: A. JAKARTA 3469
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 3214
[1](#)C. JAKARTA 3143
[1](#)D. SURABAYA 91
[1](#)E. SURABAYA 74

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate General
Surabaya.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Tensions are bubbling up in the southern
part of Sulawesi--an island in central Indonesia with about
20 million people--over a recent election. In the meantime,
after years of violence in the Poso region of central
Sulawesi, the police report that the situation is now so calm
that they have begun to scale back deployments. In North
Sulawesi, the Marine Police are utilizing four patrol
boats--recently provided by the USG--to fight transnational
crime. While the situation is in some flux in the south,
there is no sign that it will get out of control and lead to
violence. END SUMMARY.

TURBULENCE IN THE SOUTH

[1](#)3. (SBU) There is continuing tension in southern Sulawesi
over a disputed recent election. Dueling rallies were held
in Makassar, the capital of the South Sulawesi Province, on
January 2. The first rally was composed of supporters of
Amin Syam, the incumbent governor and Golkar party candidate,
who lost the November 5 election. The counter-rally was
organized by Syarul Yasin Limpo, a member of the Indonesian
Democratic Party-Struggle (PDIP) and the declared winner of
the race. The two sides jostled each other and were
eventually separated by the police. No injuries were
reported.

[1](#)4. (SBU) The dispute hinges on a December 19 Supreme Court
decision stipulating new election polling in several
districts due to claims of electoral irregularities (see ref

a). That ruling is extremely unpopular with the PDIP camp, which says that the race has already been determined in its favor by the local election commission and no repolling is necessary. The local election commission is urging that the Supreme Court review its ruling and not try to impose repolling.

CALM IN POSO

15. (C) While the south is in a state of some flux, the situation in the central region of Poso is on the upswing. Indeed, the Indonesian National Police (INP) are transferring officers from Poso to other duties. INP Provincial Police Chief Brigadier General Badrodin Haiti told poloff on January 3 that the security situation in what had been a volatile area had calmed sufficiently to move approximately 700 officers from the area. (Note: Tensions in the region between Muslims and Christians had flared in recent years in part due to extremist activities, including attacks organized by the terrorist Jemaaah Islamiyah group.)

16. (C) Haiti related that the area would continue to be protected by members of the INP Mobile Brigade and local police. He added that--while the situation in Poso had clearly improved over time--he wanted to maintain peace and stability by keeping a visible police presence throughout the regency (district) in order to make sure that militants and others could not operate with impunity.

PATROL BOATS IN THE NORTH

17. (SBU) In North Sulawesi, the U.S. Department of Justice International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) program successfully worked with the INP's Marine Police division to launch four patrol boats from the port of Bitung. The boats have been operational since late

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2007 (ref C). The boat crews have received USG training in tactical boarding techniques, search and seizure procedures and marine equipment repair.

18. (SBU) The INP has not compiled patrol or arrest statistics for 2007, but the boats are an integral part of police efforts to thwart transnational crime, including terrorism, trafficking in persons, illegal narcotics and other smuggling efforts, in the Sulawesi Sea region (the Sulawesi Sea is located between Sulawesi Island and Mindanao in the Philippines). The ICITAP program will provide a total of 15 patrol boats to the police by early 2008. These boats will be deployed to several different sites in Indonesia.

POSITIVE NEWS

19. (C) The news regarding Poso continues to be largely positive. There had been fears that the area could degenerate further, but constructive, calibrated security force operations seem to have almost halted extremist activities. While the situation is a bit tense in the south, there is no sign that it will get out of control and lead to violence.

HUME